



# **IWA BULLETIN**

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**IWA Secretariat  
Targowa 22  
03-734 Warsaw, Poland  
[secretariado@iwa-ait.org](mailto:secretariado@iwa-ait.org)**

**[iwa-ait.org](http://iwa-ait.org)**

# Contents

<b>Editorial .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>[ZSP] Health Care Workers Strike in Bielsko-Biała .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>[USI] No to the Jobs Act and Bureaucratic Unions .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>[USI] Action against Precarious Work in Education .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>[SF] Some More Struggles and Victories of Solidarity Federation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>[ZSP] Amazon Union Demands Realistic Norms and Higher Wages .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>[ZSP] No Exploitation on Public Money! .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>[ZSP] Stop Repression for Union Activity .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>[PA] Activities of Priama akcia .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>[ARS] Action against Wage Theft at Resort Hotel .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>[CNTE] Granada: Strike on March 24 .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>[CNTE] New Conflict against Mercadona .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>[CNTE] Protests against Indra .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>[IWA] May Day 2015 .....</b>	<b>10-11</b>
<b>[SF] Solidarity Against Repression in Spain .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>[KRAS] Cultural Activities of KRAS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>[IWA] Video Conferences .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Editorial

The Sections and Friends of the IWA are continuing to develop their activity. Some Sections have started new workplace unions and have already won conflicts with the bosses. Others are successfully tackling problems such as wage theft with consistent direct action. In this issue of our external bulletin, you can read about some of the news successes of our Sections and actions that we have taken part in. As we can see, the IWA is involved in a wide area of labor struggles. Its Sections are also promoting the ideas of anarchosyndicalism and bringing them to more and more people around the world.

While the bureaucratic unions pact with the bosses and the state, the working class need alternatives – unions which do not collaborate or act as the managers of worker dissent.

As much as this is needed, the IWA also plays an important role in maintaining the ideas of anarchosyndicalism and curbing the influence of all political parties and anti-libertarian ideologies within the working class. Now is a time when many anti-libertarian ideas have caught on with working people and it is organizations like ours that offer an important alternative vision for a new society.

The road ahead may be challenging but we have to stay our course. For the future of our movement and the future of the libertarian ideal. For the new world in our hearts, which will be free of politicians and representative powers, free of bosses and of capitalism!

Long live anarchosyndicalism and the IWA!

IWA Secretariat

## ZSP Health Care Workers Strike in Bielsko-Biała

On May 12, workers from a number of hospitals in Poland went on strike to protest the tragic situation of health care workers. The ZSP Health Care Workers Union also took part in the strike, as did the Union of Psychiatric and Rehab Workers in the city of Bielsko-Biała. 30 workers went on strike in the psychiatric hospital, hanging a red and black flag on the hospital. They are demanding a 400 zloty raise (about 100 euros). Many of the workers make around 450 euros a month, gross. Some earn a little more, depending on their profession.

Organized labor in the health care services is usually divided into profession. Therefore the nurses and midwives have their own union and when they protest, they are only protesting about their condition. Other professions usually do not support the protests. Our union is the only one not like this. Different workers participated in the strike: cleaners, orderlies, physical therapists, nurses and even a psychiatrist.

During the day, part of the striking workers went to the office responsible for overseeing the hospitals in the city. They were joined by nurses and midwives from OZZPiP from the Voivodship Hospital that also went on strike.

The nurses aims are similar: to get decent working conditions. The ZSP and the OZZPiP handed out material emphasising some alarming facts about health care in Poland. For example, in this country, there are only 5.2 nurses per 1000 people, whereas the EU average is more than 11, with some wealthier countries having 15-16 nurses per 1000. Statistics also show that there is an extreme drop in the number of nurses in Poland under 35 years old. Most nurses are over 45. The reason for this is two-fold: the salaries are poor, so people do not want to become nurses and secondly, younger people go abroad to work, where the salaries are usually 200-400 percent higher.

The workers would like to escalate their protests and there is talk of a general strike in the fall.



Some nurses complained of the outright sexism in their struggle and that they are not taken seriously because they are women. The ZSP union contains some men which are nurses, something rather rare in Poland. They are in the same situation – the fact is that it is a feminized profession and such professions are greatly undervalued.

A few comrades from the ZSP went to support the strike: a member of the Health Care Workers Union from Krakow and members from Warsaw and Wroclaw who had taken part in organizing radical actions together with nurses and other hospital workers at the beginnings of the 2000s. The comrades spoke to the workers about the protests then, how they looked, why they were successful and supported by many people. They called on the workers to escalate their protests, next time taking more direct action and to strike until they win.

Despite the fact that workers from two hospitals in the city went on strike, those responsible for health care did not want to meet, sending out an underling instead. He basically brushed the workers off, which met with the appropriate reaction. The angry workers began to discuss what can be done so that their situation would be treated more seriously. After the action, there were some discussions.

The ZSP and the Union of Psychiatric and Rehab Workers will be following this up and is pushing the idea of a general strike in health care, to include not only nurses

*Shortened from English section of [zsp.net.pl](http://zsp.net.pl)*

## No to the Jobs Act and the Bureaucratic Unions!



On May 15, the USI-AIT, CUB and some libertarian and political organizations took part in a local general strike against the Jobs Act in Parma. The USI spoke out against the bureaucratic unions and said that what is needed now is action in the street against the Jobs Act.

### Against Precarious Work in Education. Action in Trieste



On May 11, a demonstration against precarious work in education was held in Trieste. The demo was attended by precarious educators from recreational centers, nursery and pre-schools in Trieste. Around a hundred people took part.

The participants are happy that the next session of the City Council will discuss the requests of the protesters. The USI-AIT supported this action. They see this as only a first step in the mobilization to secure stable work for the precariat.





## Some More Struggles and Victories of Solidarity Federation

### Brighton Pub Pays Up

On Tuesday March 17th, St. Patrick's Day, a group of around 10 people accompanied a former worker of the pub. The aim was to ask if the management had an answer to the demands that he, in conjunction with Brighton Solidarity Federation, had made the previous week.

The pub is located in the Western Road area and the worker was a kitchen porter for about a year before he was sacked without any notice. As usual, he was on minimum wage and a zero-hours contract, the worst conditions the law allows.

However, the company decided this wasn't enough and didn't pay him for holiday leave not taken and the one week notice period.

After some attempts by the worker to talk to his former managers, he decided to make a demand with the support of Brighton SolFed Hospitality Workers. A demand letter was handed and sent to the company, giving them a period of one week to answer.

By Tuesday 17th - a bit more than one week later - no answer had been received apart from an email saying 'we are looking into your request'. Since, as workers, we have heard this answer enough times to know its meaning, we decided to start a public campaign immediately.

Leaflets explaining the case were given to customers inside while we started a picket outside the pub. After 10 minutes in which private security was called, and having received support from some of the customers, the general manager appeared in his car.

He said we were wrong to do what we were doing because we had already had an answer from the company, that the matter of the holiday pay 'was a mistake which they were resolving' and that 'according to investigations the worker was not entitled to get the notice pay but they will pay as proof of good faith'. Picketers answered that we would accept their resolutions and good faith as soon as the worker was paid.

On the following day we received an email from the company promising that they'll pay by the end of the month, so we suspended actions. It seems



that the company understood the message as the worker received his money by the agreed date.

Brighton SolFed considers this dispute as new proof that we can stand up to abuses in our workplaces if we refuse to shut up and if we stand together. We do not need professionals, union leaders or politicians, just solidarity among workers.

We are getting stronger with each struggle and are building a new society. Viva SolFed! Long live anarcho-syndicalism!

### Caffe Bar Italia Conflict Resolved

The Caffe Bar Italia conflict is finally resolved after over 4 months of actions as the former worker has accepted an offer from the boss. This follows weekly pickets and a social media campaign during which we received increasing support & interest from locals & contacts, many of whom boycotted the cafe. The boss' behaviour became increasingly irrational & desperate and he recently admitted to the damage we were causing to his business, despite calling cops every time we picketed and trying to incite us. Brighton SolFed Hospitality Workers proved to bosses that we're in it for the long run & are capable of maintaining an extended high profile dispute. We would like to thank all supporters for their dedication and fighting spirit, and extend solidarity to the worker, who was strong throughout!

We are currently supporting workers with demands in several disputes.

Brighton SolFed



## **ZSP Amazon Union Demands Realistic Norms and Higher Wages**

The struggle of the ZSP union in Amazon for decent working conditions continues. After winning payments for scheduled work time which wasn't paid and other non-payments for many agency workers and after the Manpower agency, which refused to pay was removed from Amazon, it is now time for new issues.

Workers from ZSP in Amazon demand decent wages and do not accept the new, raised productivity norms. Despite the promises of the management, the hourly rate has not been raised and is still 13 zloties brutto in Sady. The unionists from ZSP demand that this be raised to 16 zloties brutto – according to the promises. And the same rates should apply in both the warehouses.

ZSP Amazon also is against the raising of norms. For example, the norms in Pack were dramatically raised for single packages (from 130 per hour to 200 per hour), multi (from 100 per hour to 180 per hour) i large (from 80 per hour to 90). These unrealistic norms are unacceptable! We are not drones! We demand to be treated like humans!

Another postulate which was already promised by the management – but also without implementation - is allowing the workers to get a discount on things bought at the workplace, for example, in the canteen.

**ZSP Amazon**

## **Goodbye Manpower!**

The Manpower agency, which we have been in conflict with, have lost their contract with Amazon.

We thank all the comrades who stood in solidarity against the problems with this work agency.

We would like to point out that while most of the Amazon workers' claims have been successfully settled through the direct action campaign, ZSP has had to bring two cases against Manpower to court. We are still waiting for them to begin. One involves a rather serious industrial accident, the other compensation for time scheduled.

## **No to Exploitation on Public Money! Action at Copernicus Science Center**



On May 16, during the „Museum Night” annual event, ZSP union picketed at the Copernicus Science Center in Warsaw. The action brought together two campaigns – against the use of outsourcing, trash contracts and the subminimum wage at public institutions and an organizing campaign in the Ekotrade agency. Ekotrade is known for its use of trash contracts and low wages and is used by the Science Center.

Hundreds and hundreds of people were at the event. We spoke to people about the situation and handed out leaflets. The Center got very nervous and called the police, who were intent on stopping the action. Security and some event organizers tried to intervene claiming that we were not allowed to hand out leaflets on the sidewalk, which we ignored and made people more interested in what was happening. Despite the harrassment, a few hundred leaflets were given out.

The ZSP has been campaigning for the past year against the use of trash contracts and the subminimum wage in public institutions. We fought successfully with the Impuls agency and many of their contracts were terminated. Our postulate is that public institutions either hire people directly or, if they do use outside companies, that the entity making a public tender should make workers' rights a requirement. Only firms which give proper contracts and pay at least the minimum wage should be used. These postulates have been gaining support.

Despite the fact that the ZSP's postulates would be a good solution and even has some political support, some members of government pretend that such provisions cannot be put in a public tender. This is not true and a few days ago we saw the first example of how this could be applied in practice. ZTM, which runs public bus transport in Warsaw, holds tenders for various bus routes. It has now announced that workers' rights must be respected and it will put several conditions in the tender. One of them requires the bus companies to give the drivers work contracts.

The local ZSP welcomes the initiative of the ZTM, which should be an example for other institutions. When justifying their decisions to make these requirements, they recalled the wildcat strike of 32 Ukrainian bus drivers in 2008. It was ZSP which had contacted them about their working conditions, documented the problems, publicized the case and helped the drivers get their payment.

It has taken years for any action to be taken against the companies which the city uses and which exploit their workers. We are hoping that by focusing more public attention of the concrete cases of abuse that something will begin to shift. We invite the agency workers to join us!

### Stop Repression for Union Activity!

Black Red White (BRW) is a large furniture manufacturer with around 11,000 employees in Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Slovakia and Bosnia Hercegovina. Its furniture is sold in about 1000 locations in Poland but also in all of Eastern Europe, some Western European countries, the US and Canada. It's owner, Tadeusz Chmiel, is one of the richest men in Poland, whose wealth was estimated at 1.65 billion zloties (half a billion euros).

A member of ZSP has been on trial for a few months now, under article 212 of the criminal code, which is so-called „slander which causes a loss of the trust needed to conduct business activity”. Without any comments as to this law, which can be abused in many ways, our comrade is not guilty since we did not slander anybody. We made protests against the furniture giant because of its repressions against a comrade unionist.



In July 2013, ZSP called for solidarity actions at BRW furniture outlets after the dismissal of Jarek P. from the Furniture Makers' Union at the Nidzica factory. JP received a disciplinary dismissal after the publication of an article in the newspaper describing an incident at the factory. JP, as a unionist, tried to fight for the workers' rights. He was fired for „violating the good name” of the company and „revealing secrets”.

The ZSP had contact with other workers in the factory and knew that the incident he described was true and knew that the local labour inspectorate also ignored his unions' reports (something that happens all too often). We consider such actions of BRW to constitute retaliation against a unionist for simply saying what took place at the factory. And we consider such actions and every concept which legitimizes them to be attacks on workers' organization and freedom of speech and conscience. Therefore we decided to picket BRW furniture outlets around Poland. On the first day, actions took place in Wrocław and Rzeszów. But BRW decided to make a deal with JP, who was going to take the company to court to get his job back.

BRW asked the Economic Crimes Division of the Prosecutor's Office to get after us. They declined to prosecute, but the company did not give up and eventually a case was made against one comrade.

The trial has been going on for a while. At the last hearing in April, four former employees testified to various health and safety violations, circumvention of the labor law and to harassment of unionists.

**More information: [zsp.net.pl](http://zsp.net.pl)**



## Priama akcia activities January 2015 – May 2015



**Amazon.** On Thursday, 29th January, Priama akcia (PA) union organized a protest action in front of the Amazon branch in Bratislava, in solidarity with workers in two Polish warehouses who stood up against the practices of Amazon and started to organize with Związek Syndykalistów Polski (ZSP).

The action took place during the lunch hour in front of the headquarters of the Bratislava branch. PA drew attention to the practices of Amazon with pickets and leaflets distributed to passers-by including Amazon employees, with whom we discussed the reasons for the action. Some of them knew about recent protests in USA and also Germany. There was no negative feedback, rather the opposite.

A large part of the workers noticed the protest.

<http://www.priamaakcia.sk/Protest-in-Bratislava-against-Amazon-practices.html>

**Problems with OTTO Work Force agency.** People still contact us regarding very bad situation in Holland (mainly accommodation and not enough work), where they travel to work via the agency.

**Helping workers with problems at work.** We received requests for help in workplace related issues on a bi-weekly basis on average. No open conflicts at the moment.

[www.priamaakcia.sk](http://www.priamaakcia.sk)



## Golden Sands: Against Wage Theft in Resort Hotel

On March 8 2015 activists of the Varna section of the Autonomous Workers' Union (ARS), together with former workers of the night club at the International hotel, held a protest in front of the hotel, located in the Golden Sands resort.

The workers were demanding payment of their wage arrears that have accumulated over many months. They had already carried out a similar protest on March 1, when 15 former employees of the bar picketed, demanding that owner pay wage arrears in the amount of 9500 leva (about \$5000). Some of them had work books (labour contracts), others were "black market" workers without a contract. ARS Varna supports the demands of the workers and organized the protest action in defense of their labour rights.

The workers were hired by the firm "Vencheloti" in October. Some of them signed labour contracts at minimum wage, while others had only an oral agreement. The owner promised to pay, but so far hasn't done so. According to the former administrator of the bar, five people worked without a contract for six months, but haven't received anything.

The ARS calls on all present and former employees, and all citizens sympathetic to the plight of colleagues, friends and acquaintances who are being victimized by the deceitful practices of Bulgarian resorts, to come together in protest actions.

<http://arsindikar.org>





## Granada: Strike of 24 March

### NO TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPITAL!

On March 24, the CNT-AIT of Granada joined in the education march with our workers from the administration of the university, lecturers and researchers as well as students against the 3+2. (*System of studies proposing 3-year degrees plus two years for a masters' – translator.*) The Education Section distributed information in the days before that, hung posters and banners.

At 9:00 the informational pickets on the Cartuja campus of the University of Granada started. We visited the faculties of Philosophy, Economy, Psychology, Pedagogy and Medicine, among others. We informed the students and professors of the reasons for the strike and suggested they end their classes.

At 12:00 we went as a critical block in a demonstration with two banners: "Against the 3+2 and the University of Capital. Self-organization and Direct Action" and "Public is the State's, Private is a Company's and only Self-Managed is Ours". There were slogans against the commercialized university and for self-organization, such as "Neither public, nor private but self-managed", "Companies out of the university", "Workers, if you don't fight, nobody will listen to you".

In this way we finished the day of struggle calling for the self-organization of the educational sector against the attacks of savage capitalism allied with the State and for self-managed education to continue with the work of the Education Section.

**Neither public nor private but self-managed!  
Organize and fight!**



## Tarragona: New Conflict with Mercadona



On February 21, the CNT Tarragona protested against a Mercadona supermarket in Comarruga (Tarragona), in support of two workers fired there after having been subject to insults, humiliation and threats for a long time for demanding that their basic rights as workers be respected.

During the day, many leaflets were distributed and many people decided to boycott this great exploiter, promising not to buy anything there.

The CNT promised to continue the actions until the conflict was finished and the workers reinstated. Solidarity pickets were organized in places such as Andujar, Jaen, Salamanca, Oveido, Madrid, Elche, Barcelona ... At the end of March, the CNT Tarragona announced the end of the conflict, with the workers having been offered favourable economic settlements.

## Protests against Indra



The CNT Metal Workers' Union in Madrid called for protests against Indra company. The union had been in conflict with this firm and two of its organizers were fired. As it turned out, executives of Indra were later accused of buying judges and of lying in court, including at the case concerning the comrades. Pickets were organized at Indra offices throughout Spain and in Poland.

## May Day 2015



### AIT-SP Mayday - Lisbon, Porto and Guimarães

SOV-Porto joined the Mayday events at the Casa Viva libertarian collective, where we handed over leaflets and other materials. The Guimarães section also did the same but in a public square. For the second consecutive year, the Lisbon section of AIT-SP called for a concentration on the 1st of May at the Rossio Square. A few dozen people joined in what turned out to be a demonstration on several streets of the capital. In solidarity with the supermarket worker's strike, the protesters carried out a blockade at the entrance of Pingo Doce - a chain of supermarkets. A policeman tried to evict the protesters and soon after more policemen arrived who followed us onto the streets and prevented us to make yet another picket in front of McDonald's. The demonstration continued down the Augusta Street and Terreiro do Paço. Later in the day, our section distributed informational material depicting the history of Mayday in a picket outside the Chiado shopping center. At the same time, we informed about the current fight some of our members are carrying in making work-contracts for teachers who are wrongly considered "falsos autónomos". Some of the most used slogans were: "Mayday is not a party, it's for fighting," "Neither left nor right, it's all the same cult", "Sabotage! Wild Strike! Neither state nor boss! Self-management."

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sp.blogspot.com



**Brazil:** COB-AIT organized various public meetings, demonstrations and cultural events on May 1, in Sao-Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto-Alegre and Araxa. In Porto Alegre, COB went out with slogans like reduction of the working week to 30 hours without a reduction in salary, against the rising cost of living, reductions in health care and education. It also had slogans against outsourcing and precarization.



**Argentina:** The FORA organized rallies in cities such as Buenos Aires, Neuquen and Rosario.



**Poland:** The ZSP decided to make pickets in a sector they are trying to organize in and which works on many public holidays. They stood at the entrances of Multikino cinemas and inside giving out leaflets and talking about the bad working conditions in these and other movie theatres.

**Italy:** USI organized first of May demonstrations in various cities, sometime together with other organizations. Below is a photo from Milan.





**UK:** The Solfed organized and took part in various events. The Brighton group organized a four-day weekend event. In Bristol the comrades picketed against Workfare. In Edinburgh and Glasgow the comrades demonstrated with other libertarian groups and alternative unions. In Newcastle, the comrades also organized a benefit against repression in Spain.

**Serbia:** The ASI went to a May Day march in Belgrade with agitational material calling for a general strike.



**France:** Members of the CNT-AIT protested and made literature tables in different cities like Toulouse, Caen and Clermont-Ferrand.

**Bulgaria:** The ARS took part in different demonstrations in Sofia, Varna, Vidin, Kochan and Burgos.



**Spain:** The CNT organized and took part in demonstrations all around Spain. The list is too long to write them all. We will just publish a few photos from May Day demonstrations organized by the CNT-AIT.

*For more photos see the page of the CNT:*  
**[www.cnt.es](http://www.cnt.es)**



Almeria



Salamanca



Elche

### **Actions against Repression in Spain**

As mentioned earlier, in the UK the comrades from Solfed organized a benefit against repression in Spain and also this theme appeared on marches during May Day. This is part of ongoing solidarity work that some Sections and Friends of the IWA and other libertarian organizations have been doing to support anarchist prisoners.



May Day in Glasgow



## Cultural activities KRAS



Activists of the Federation of Workers in Education, Science and Technology (FRONT), an affiliate of KRAS, participated in the organization of a series of cultural events in Moscow, the purpose of which was to familiarize the public with the history, experience and practice of anarchism and the anarcho-syndicalist movement.

On April 17, an exhibition on the history of anarchism opened in the Centre for Social-Political History of the State Public Historical Library. Books and periodicals devoted to the prehistory of anarchism, to Russian anarchism in the 19th and 20th centuries and to the international anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements of the 20th century were on display. Members of FRONT helped to gather the materials. They also spoke at a conference which opened the exhibition.

On April 19, a round table on the history of the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939 was held at the Dostoevsky Library in Moscow. Comrades from KRAS acted as co-organizers of the event and were the main speakers.

*Below: Solidaridad Obrera, Der Syndikalist and La Protesta.*



## IWA Video Conferences

On Sunday, 23rd March 2015, the Secretariat of the IWA organized a videoconference on wage theft. The aim was to share experiences from conflicts against bosses and this way help others to act more effectively. We used this form of presentation and discussion for the first time and the result is very positive. Members of organizations from Europe and USA took part in the videoconference, from both the IWA and non-affiliated organizations.

The topic was very practical and gave activists a chance to share experiences and gain knowledge.

A report on the conference was written by a participant from Slovakia and published on the IWA website.

Since then we have organized several other conferences, including one with a friendly organization. We started a series on the ABCs of anarcho-syndicalism for organizations which are new or people who are just interested. A short video was made of one person's presentation, which has been viewed positively by hundreds of people.

Although we see that this technology is not perfect and there have been a few technical screw-ups, we see this as a positive way to reach comrades around the globe to share experiences.

**the  
of  
anarcho-syndicalist  
organization**

The next conference in the series on starting an anarcho-syndicalist organization will be held on Sunday, May 31. The conference is by invitation only, so please contact the Secretariat if you would like to participate. [secretariado@iwa-ait.org](mailto:secretariado@iwa-ait.org)